



HM GREETES PRESIDENT OF EGYPT

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Abdul Fattah El Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt on the occasion of the 23 July Revolution Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health, wellbeing and long life to the Egyptian President. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty to grant President El Sisi success and for the people of Egypt to achieve further development and growth. — **ONA**



Founded 1975 · Volume 49 No. 99 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group





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SAYYID SHIHAB BIDS FAREWELL TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, yesterday received Veronique Aulagnon, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid her farewell at the end of her tour of duty. During the meeting, HH Sayyid Shihab thanked the ambassador for the efforts she exerted in promoting bilateral cooperation, and wished her continued success. On her turn, the Ambassador lauded the strength of relations between Oman and France. She also expressed her pride and appreciation for the cooperation extended to her during her tenure in Oman. — **ONA**

ASYAD EXPANDS ITS GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

The landmark acquisition is the group's first international acquisition in core logistics activities



MUSCAT: Asyad Group, Oman's pioneering end-to-end global logistics provider, has acquired Skybridge Freight Solutions (SFS), a leading global freight forwarding company.

The landmark acquisition is the group's first international acquisition in core logistics activities and marks a strategic move to significantly expand Asyad's footprint through active operations in key trade hubs and the major economies of China, India, the USA and the GCC, supported by unhindered access to SFS' well-established, dynamic network that covers over 90 geographies across six continents.

Now acquired by Asyad Group, SFS is a premier freight solutions provider offering leading freight forwarding services across air, sea and land in addition to warehousing and distribution.

The fast-growing company boasts a strong financial footing and caters to a diverse array of major industries including food, energy, automotive, pharmaceuticals and construction.

The company serves over 1,400 customers, including Fortune 500 and blue-chip companies, leveraging its longstanding relationships with global freight forwarding networks, government bodies, ship-

ping lines and airlines to carve a substantial competitive edge and open multiple avenues for growth.

With this acquisition, Asyad aims to bolster its competitiveness in the global marketplace by magnifying its end-to-end capabilities in providing unparalleled multimodal logistics services to meet evolving customer needs.

The impacts of the recent acquisition are far-reaching and will extend across the entire logistics ecosystem, with more capabilities in freight forwarding leading to advances in supply chain, e-commerce, ports and container lines. >**A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN GIP conducts 1bn data exchange operations

1 During the first half of 2024, the transport ministry followed up 200 million data exchange requests and observed the processing of one billion transactions through the GIP. >**A2**

OMAN RAFO to buy copters

2 The RAFO signed a contract with the US firm to helicopters. >**A5**

WORLD Harris seeks support

3 Vice President Kamala Harris seeks support for her White House bid. >**A7**

GAZA DEATH TOLL

as of July 22, 2024





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GIP conducts 1bn data exchange operations

The Government Integration Platform constitutes an essential pillar in the digital infrastructure of the Sultanate of Oman

MUSCAT: During the first half of 2024, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology followed up 200 million data exchange requests and observed the processing of one billion transactions through the Government Integration Platform (GIP).
The GIP currently hosts 152 electronic services provided by 32 government institutions. The services benefit 64 entities, including units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and private sector establishments.
The accomplishment reflects



DATA EXCHANGE: The GIP currently hosts 152 electronic services provided by 32 government institutions. - ONA

the Ministry's efforts as part of its plan to enhance the efficiency of government services and improve user experience within the Government Digital Transition Plan.

Transactions
The platform seeks to streamline procedures and accelerate the fast completion of government

transactions by enabling parties concerned to access the necessary data. The measure limits paperwork and enhances government services, thereby saving the time and efforts of citizens, residents and business sectors.

The Government Integration Platform constitutes an essential

pillar in the digital infrastructure of the Sultanate of Oman. It serves as a common platform for exchanging data in a safe and smooth manner.

The GIP also allows government units to exchange data with their GCC counterparts in a centralised and secure manner through the Gulf Network. -ONA

Oman takes part in World Heritage panel meeting



DISCUSSION: The meetings, which will run till 31 July, are organised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). -ONA

NEW DELHI: The Sultanate of Oman is taking part in the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee meetings, held in New Delhi, India.

The meetings, which will run till 31 July, are organised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Oman's delegation in the 46th session is headed by Dr. Hamad Saif Al Hamami, Permanent Rep-

resentative of the Sultanate of Oman to UNESCO.

Heritage list
The session will discuss a spectrum of topics, such as the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as deciding on which properties included in the list are to be inscribed or removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, among other topics. -ONA

KHAREEF SEASON

Oman Across Ages Museum launches 'Damek Wasel' campaign



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Coinciding with the Khareef season in Dhofar Governorate, the Oman Across Ages Museum has launched the 'Damek Wasel' campaign.
The 'Damek Wasel' campaign began on Monday at the Oman

Across Ages Museum in its second edition, coinciding with the Khareef season in the Dhofar Governorate to make the museum an essential destination for visitors heading to Dhofar Governorate.
The campaign aims to enhance the museum's presence on the

map of local and international tourist destinations during this season.
The campaign includes broadcasting many publications on the museum's social media platforms and other marketing means to enhance the historic and cultural awareness of visitors and learn



about the history of the Sultanate of Oman, the ancient eras and the ongoing achievements it has witnessed, in addition to the abundant nature and geographical diversity God has given to the country.
This entire process is done in an interactive manner using the

latest technologies in museum display.
The campaign also includes various applications and marketing methods in multiple locations inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman, using language and messages that suit and support its approach to ensure reaching the tar-

get audience.
It is noteworthy that the first version of the campaign, which was launched in August of last year, achieved remarkable results over this period.
The number of visitors to the museum in August 2023 reached more than 77,000.

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GRADUATION CEREMONY

Academy for Strategic, Defence Studies celebrates graduation of 37th batch



MUSCAT: The Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies on Monday celebrated the graduation of the 37th batch from the Joint Command and Staff College.
The ceremony was held under the auspices of Sultan Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance.
Moreover, the batch included several officers from the Ministry of Defence, the Sultan's Armed Forces and other military and security units.
It was also participated by officers from GCC, Arab and friendly countries.
The graduation ceremony was attended by ministers, commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces and other military and security units, senior officers, military attachés of various embassies in Muscat and academic staff members from the academy. -ONA





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COMMENTARY

Oman's marked transformation since 23 July, 1970



**SADIQ MOHAMED
SAID AL-LAWATY**

Today marks the 54th anniversary of the eternal Renaissance Day, when late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, may God have mercy on him, assumed the reins of government in the country, succeeding his father. On this happy occasion, I am pleased to present the following article to the readers.

It is difficult for me and for everyone who witnessed this day to forget and ignore 23 July, 1970. Before that, I spent about 30 years of my life in the dark, living as if we were animals without a tail, when Omanis were deprived of electricity, clean drinking water, health and educational services, and all other necessities of life. The reason for this state of affairs was the lack of an income source base for the country, and when oil was found and the first shipment of it was exported in June 1967, the country's construction movement began, albeit slowly. A piped drinking water distribution project was implemented in Muscat and Muttrah, and the construction of Muttrah Corniche began. Co-educational schools were established in Muscat and Muttrah. Late Sultan Said bin Taimur was against the idea of borrowing from abroad, and in my opinion,

he was right because how could he repay the loan when the Sultanate had no income. This may also have been the reason for the policies of his predecessors, where the country remained in recession until the source of foreign asset income, crude oil, was secured. In that era, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was the only country in the world that did not have any foreign debts.

I was in London on 23 July 1970 with seven other PDO employees for a 40-week educational course. A representative of Shell International Petroleum Company, which was responsible for our stay in London, visited us at the college to reassure us that there was no need to worry about what happened in Muscat and that all things were stable there and under full control of the government. Shell appears to have matched the change in rule from father to son, with change in other countries where some undesirable events such as unrest, murder and other crisis usually occur. Or it may have received a request from the company in Muscat that someone from Shell should visit us for the purpose of reassuring us of the change in government in Muscat. None of us wanted to point out to him that we had been waiting for this day for a long time and with great longing, and the day has come, thank God. I'm sure he was surprised that none of us were upset about what happened in Muscat but instead noticed the smiles on our faces. I wish everyone of my generation, as there are many still alive, would write about where they were and their reaction when they heard the news. During that period, many Omanis were working in the Gulf countries, and for those inside the country, how did news of the change reach them? There were no media such as radio or newspapers in the country. 23 July was later known as 'Renaissance Day'.



This day, by all standards, was a blessed day that transformed the country from an age of darkness to an age of light.

The writer should include in the book the lifestyle that the people of Muscat and Oman lived, so this information will be a history for generations that did not witness that dark period, and if there is someone who wrote about that era, there is no harm in writing, as the writing style differs from one person to another, and some things may be mentioned that others did not mention. Your descendants may not be able to see what others have written about the lifestyle that the people of Muscat and Oman lived, so that this information will remain history for generations that did not witness that period and the hardship and harassment their ancestors faced.

When I visit the cemetery, I see old graves whose owners were perhaps buried 150 or 200 years ago, and most of them are piles of sand and stones without the names of their inhabitants. I wonder who these dead are? Why did they not write anything about the period in which they lived and some information specific to that period? Don't be like them, write a little about the environment in which you lived.

We were not created to live a few years and then die, and after a while it becomes as if we had never lived. Is this the wisdom of our existence? I don't think so.

The Sultanate celebrated its National Day on 23rd July, 1971 and 1972, since Sultan Qaboos assumed power, may God rest his soul, succeeding his father. In the first year, the military parade was held in the morning in Al Wadi Al Kabir in Ruwi, where the area was semi-desert, and in the second year on the grounds of the old airport in the Bait Al Falaj area, and I attended both events. National Day was later moved to 17-18 November due to hot weather conditions in July.

I sent a congratulatory telegram to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos from London. He responded by thanking me for the congratulatory telegram. His telegram was published in my book (Pre-1970 Oman) which was published in 2019. One reader commented on the book with the following, and his words are recorded at the end of the book: "The book is very interesting. I enjoyed reading it very much. I was very surprised when I saw copies of old documents. How did you manage to preserve them all these years with all their minute details? When I read your reaction and respect

to His Majesty the Sultan's telegram, I am pleased by your expression and respect for him. This telegram is a treasure that should be kept for your children because I do not think many people were lucky enough to be honoured with it".

I am sure that no Omani born before 1970 will forget this day. I will continue to celebrate it privately throughout my life. How could I not remember this day when the darkness in which we were living turned into light for the homeland and the Omanis.

The aforementioned book is not limited to events before 1970, as the reader might think. Rather, it is divided into two parts. The first section talks about achievements, i.e. the situation after 23 July, 1970, in a few pages, and the second section talks about Oman's historical past in a number of pages. The book is in English and I wrote it specifically for the employees of the Petroleum Development Oman from which I retired in 1988.

In my letter to the Managing Director, I expressed my view that the new employees of the company would be happy to learn about the lifestyle that Omanis lived before 1970. The company's Managing Director responded to my letter by saying

"The historical overview you have captured of life in Muscat and Oman is indeed interesting and far removed from today's reality and from social development and infrastructure. I have no doubt that many readers, new employees and current employees alike will find it very interesting and educational. I will soon reach out to our External Affairs Director for his guidance to share the book more widely. Again, thank you for your book".

A copy of the book was delivered to the embassies of the United Kingdom, India and Iran, which had consulates in Muscat before the 1970s, and only the representative of the United Kingdom, His Excellency Ambassador Hamish Cowell, responded to me via e-mail, saying: "Thank you very much for the kind gift of a copy of your book (Pre-1970 Oman). I am very much looking forward to reading it, as it has arrived at the right time and is a welcome addition to the Embassy's library on the occasion of the Sultanate of Oman's celebration of its 60th National Day".

What I deeply regret is the lack of response from any official in several ministries to whom I presented a copy of the book in the name of the minister. I am used to this behaviour. I deliver copies of my books to the offices of some Omani ministers, retired ministers and under-secretaries, doctors, engineers, and others, and I do not even receive thanks from them. One of them tried to thank me for the copy of the book I sent him to his office, but he sent a WhatsApp message to my grandson, whose first name is the same as mine.

May God have mercy on Sultan Qaboos bin Said and help his successor, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, his cousin, in everything. Happy new year to the Omani people

(The article is personal opinion of the author)

DEVELOP THE SKILLS

Youth Centre implements summer programmes 2024

MUSCAT: The Youth Centre on Monday implemented a number of summer programmes in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The programmes were meant to develop the skills, talents and capabilities of young people.

The programmes were diversified in terms of content and they covered technical, entrepreneurial, cultural and entertainment areas.

They were distributed across the governorates in a manner that commensurates with the resources and the number of participants.

The programmes were distributed in the governorates as follows: 14 in Muscat Governorate, six in Al Dakhiliyah, three in Al Buraimi Governorate, five in Al Dhahirah Governorate, three in North Al Sharqiyah, 12 in South Al Sharqiyah, eight in Al Wusta, six in Musandam, nine in North Al Batinah, three in South Al Batinah, and 14 in Dhofar.

The implementation of the programmes reflected the keenness of the Youth Centre to integrate the efforts of government and private establishments in supporting young people.

Amira bint Mohammed Al Balushi, programme supervisor at the Youth Centre, said: "The Summer 2024 programmes aim to discover and develop the skills of Omani youth, invest their time



in their areas of interest, and enhance their effective participation in various initiatives and projects.”

The implementation of these

programs came as part of the Youth Centre's efforts to integrate the efforts of government and private institutions in supporting youth and creating good spaces for them to improve their skills and apply them on the ground.

She pointed out that the centre implemented a diverse package of programmes in technical, educational, cultural and entrepreneurial tracks, which included a number of specialised camps, including: marketing and innovation, entrepreneurship, creative industries and modern technologies.

Al Balushi stressed the centre's keenness to achieve its goals by providing an environment that nurtures the creativity of young people, honing their skills and keeping pace with their ambitions and needs. -ONA

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Muscat Municipality signs agreement for the establishment of modern park



The pact was signed by Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, and Saud bin Hilal Al Sabri, owner of the Diwaniya Omani Sweets project

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality has signed an agreement with Saud bin Hilal Al Sabri LLC to lease municipal land for the establishment of a uniquely designed park with public and commercial amenities, as well as the Diwaniya Omani Sweets Factory in the Al Mawaleh South area of the Wilayat of Seeb.

The agreement was signed by Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, and Saud bin Hilal

Al Sabri, owner of the Diwaniya Omani Sweets project, at the municipality building in Darsait.

The agreement grants Saud bin Hilal Al Sabri LLC the right to lease a plot of municipal land in the Al Mawaleh South area, covering a total area of 31,182 square meters, for a duration of 20 years to establish a public park with a variety of facilities designed to provide a recreational space for the community. The park will include walking and cycling paths, children's play areas,

green spaces, sports courts, table tennis facilities, an amphitheatre and event spaces, kiosks and cafes operated by small and medium enterprises, as well as service facilities such as restrooms, car parking, and prayer areas.

Additionally, an area of the project facing the public street will be allocated for the establishment of the Diwaniya Omani Sweets Factory. This factory will feature a visitor experience centre, offering guests a direct opportunity to discover traditional Omani sweets manufacturing methods and ingredients.

Commenting on the partnership, Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Humaidi stated, "Muscat Municipality is committed to utilising its assets to achieve benefits beyond direct profits, focusing on the societal impact of the investment. This agreement serves as a model for purposeful partnerships between the public and private

sectors. The Municipality strives to enhance its efforts in the realm of social responsibility, launching initiatives that contribute to the development of cities and provinces, creating job opportunities for national talents, maximising local value addition, and thereby contributing to economic and social development goals."

Muscat Municipality continuously seeks to enhance cooperation between the public and private sectors and engage with local community entities to create projects and initiatives that stimulate sustainable growth. The Municipality is dedicated to providing all essential resources related to serving the region, urban planning, and building neighbourhoods, aiming to enhance tourism, boost the economy, facilitate development, and improve the quality of life of residents in alignment with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.



WILAYAT OF BARKA

Silal Market receives more than 1,100 cooling units

BARKA: More than 1,100 cooling units have been received at the Central Market for Vegetables and Fruits (Silal) in the Wilayat of Barka, South Al Batinah Governorate, since the start of market's operations in June 2024.

The marketplace accommodated more than 26,000 tonnes of goods imported from countries of origin, in addition to local and neighboring markets.

Silal seeks to develop wholesale trade, using a wide range of equipment and services that are aimed to serve traders, importers and exporters, said Othman Ali Al Hattali, Director of Operations at Silal Market.

Al Hattali added in a press statement that the current capacity of Silal market stands at more than 25,000 tons of vegetables and fruits, noting that the market facilities were set up in a manner that preserves the quality of vegetables and fruits from damage, thereby cutting down the rate of loss through proper storage.

Al Hattali pointed out that the market includes an air-conditioned wholesale hall occupying an area of 30,000 square metres, in addition to 90 refrigerated warehouses (area of 126 square meters per refrigerator).

Al Hattali explained that all the refrigerators available in the market have so far been hired, much in confirmation of Silal market's significance to traders and members of the public. -ONA



Silal seeks to develop wholesale trade, using a wide range of equipment and services that are aimed to serve traders, importers and exporters



ROYAL AIR FORCE OF OMAN

RAFO signs contract to purchase helicopters from American company

MUSCAT: The Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) signed a contract with the American company (Bell Textron) to purchase a number of helicopters.

The move comes within the framework of development and modernisation plans aimed at strengthening the RAFO capabilities.

The procurement of this type of aircraft also comes to enhance the level of performance and efficiency enjoyed by the RAFO, in line with the requirements of modernisation and development.



Comprehensive development

This step contributes to supporting the comprehensive development witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman during the prosperous era of His Majesty the Sultan, the Supreme Commander.

The selection of this type of aircraft also meets the elements of flexibility and effective performance that suit the RAFO needs.

The purchase of this aircraft will constitute another addition within the framework of the national operational or developmental tasks and duties undertaken by the RAFO especially those related to community service. -ONA

MEETING

Oman, Kuwait to boost cooperation in academic field

MUSCAT: Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation received on Monday in her office Dr. Lamia Al Melhem, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education in the State of Kuwait.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed means of enhancing bilateral cooperation in academic fields, as well as boosting the cultural exchange between the two countries.

Moreover, the meeting touched on a set of relevant topics, including the possibility of connecting higher education institutions in the two countries. -ONA



BOLSTERING CONNECTIVITY

Asyad will now have active operations in prominent cargo origin economies

<FROM A1 Additionally, Asyad will now have active operations in key cargo origin economies. As a result, the group – now leveraging SFS' capabilities and network of associates – will reinforce its position as the partner of choice for international enterprises seeking comprehensive GCC logistics solutions under one integrated entity, setting itself apart by leveraging its advanced capabilities and Oman's unique location and innate advantages.

Acquiring SFS will play a significant role in bolstering Oman's connectivity with vital global trade routes. By unlocking new connections and strengthening existing ones with the world's biggest markets, all logistics players will reap the benefits of unrestricted multimodal access and amplified trade opportunities resulting in higher volumes.

With these targeted moves, Asyad aims to ultimately redraw the global trade map. The SFS acquisition marks a significant milestone for the group and underlines its integrated logistics model that has consistently set



new standards and trends in the logistics industry. The new addition is a critical step to pursue Asyad's portfolio diversification plans and uphold the group's unwavering commitment to its customers of increasing global service coverage.

By integrating the capabilities and market access of SFS, Asyad's flag will consistently make its way into prime global markets, opening new avenues for exponential

growth and cementing the group's position as a reliable global logistics powerhouse.

With SFS now part of Asyad Group, the integrated logistics provider will take its bullish approach to global expansion forward with future plans focused on long-term financial returns and an enhanced offering of globally competitive logistics solutions to trade communities around the world.

Both Asyad and SFS customers will be the first to experience the returns of this integration through improved reach and heightened service excellence, exemplified by multimodal freight forwarding solutions.

Asyad will equip players in GCC markets with stronger connectivity to major cargo origin markets through SFS' network of associate offices that covers key trade location around the world from China and India in the east to the United States and Europe in the west.

Asyad Group's year-over-year growth reflects a robust commercial mindset built around operational excellence and dynamic decision-making. In 2023, the group reported a 21% compound annual growth rate in revenue and 73% compound annual growth rate in profits, two record numbers in its history.

The recent acquisition will further support Asyad's ongoing streak of double-digit year-on-year growth by providing new opportunities and resources, ensuring sustained success and market leadership. -ONA

ROP

Two arrested

Times News Service

MUSCAT:The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has arrested two expatriates for stealing large quantities of steel used for construction purposes from a company in the Wilayat of Al Khaboura. The ROP said: "The North Al Batinah Governorate Police Command arrested two people of Asian nationality for stealing large quantities of steel used for construction purposes. The legal procedures were completed against them."



Ministry of Defence

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Three Bangladeshis get life term, 54 jailed for unlawful meet in UAE

The court also ordered the deportation of the accused at the end of their prison terms

ABU DHABI: The Abu Dhabi Federal Court of Appeal on Sunday sentenced 57 Bangladeshi nationals, who gathered and incited riots in several streets across the UAE on Friday.

The court sentenced three of the accused to life imprisonment for calling for demonstrations and inciting riots to pressure their home government. Another 53 defendants received ten-year prison terms, with one, who entered the country illegally and participated in the riot, being sentenced to eleven years.

The court also ordered their deportation at the end of their prison terms and the confiscation of all seized devices.

On Friday, Chancellor Dr. Hamad Saif Al Shamsi, UAE Attorney-General, had ordered an immedi-



ate investigation into the arrested Bangladeshi nationals for unlawful assembly and inciting riots in several streets across the UAE.

The defendants were brought to trial after an investigation led by a team of 30 investigators confirmed their involvement in gathering in public, inciting unrest, disrupting public security, and promoting such gatherings and protests, including recording and disseminating audiovisual footage of these actions online. Several of the defendants confessed to the crimes with which they were accused.

During the trial, covered by the media, the Public Prosecution demanded the maximum penalty for the accused.

The court heard a witness who confirmed that the defendants gathered and organised large-scale marches in several streets of the UAE in protest against decisions made by the Bangladeshi government. This led to riots, disruption of public security, obstruction of law enforcement, and endangerment of public and private property. The police had warned the protesters, ordering them to disperse, to which they were unresponsive.

The court-appointed defence lawyer argued that there the gathering had no criminal intent and that the evidence was insufficient, demanding the acquittal of the defendants. However, the court found sufficient evidence of their guilt and convicted them accordingly. -WAM

BOMBING

Israeli forces attack Al Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza, kill 91

GAZA: The Israeli occupation has intensified its airstrikes and severe shelling on the Al Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza Strip in an unprecedented manner over the past seven days.

The Gaza government media office stated that the occupation forces bombed the Al Nuseirat camp with fighter jets, tanks, and naval vessels 63 times within a week, resulting in 91 martyrs and 251 wounded.

The statement pointed out that more than 75 percent of the casualties from the continuous bombardment on the camp were taken to hospitals with their bodies burnt due to the Israeli occupation's use of thermal and chemical weapons.

Al Nuseirat refugee camp, currently home to a quarter million residents and displaced persons, is



subjected to brutal shelling by the occupation forces, disregarding the civilian population density.

Among the worst massacres in recent days was the one committed by the occupation at the Al Razi School in the camp, which resulted in 23 martyrs and 73 wounded.

IOF opens fire towards UN convoy heading to Gaza

The United Nations Relief and

Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said that the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) opened heavy fire on a UN convoy that was heading to Gaza City yesterday.

Military checkpoint

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said in a post on X that an agency vehicle was hit by at least five bullets while it was waiting in front of an Israeli military checkpoint in the central Gaza Strip.

"This happened yesterday and the teams were traveling in an armored vehicle with clearly marked UN markings and wearing UN vests," Lazzarini added.

He affirmed that the IOF opened heavy fire on the convoy that was heading to Gaza City on Sunday. -ONA



Printed and published by:
Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112

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PROTESTS

Germany issues advisory against travel to Bangladesh



DHAKA: The German Foreign Office has advised citizens to avoid travel to Bangladesh. "There is a curfew in place following violent clashes, and internet and mobile services are blocked," the ministry said in an X post on Sunday.

The office expects the situation in the South Asian nation to get worse. "More than 100 people have already died during the demonstrations and protests," the report said.

Germans already in Bangladesh have been advised to register with the crisis preparedness list.

Hundreds arrested in civil unrest

The US State Department had also warned Americans on Saturday not to travel to Bangladesh and announced it would begin removing some diplomats and their families from the country.

The advisory came soon after a new curfew was imposed on Friday, following days of deadly protests that saw more than 105 people killed.

On Monday, the French AFP news agency reported, citing a police officer, that more than 500 people were arrested in the

unrest.

"At least 532 people have been arrested over the violence," Dhaka Metropolitan Police spokesman Faruk Hossain told AFP. "They include some BNP leaders," he added, referring to the opposition Bangladesh National Party.

Why did protests erupt in Bangladesh?

Bangladesh has been embroiled in country-wide protests over a reservation system, which had been abolished in 2018 following large-scale student demos.

The old quota system reserves more than half of the civil service positions for specific groups.

A court reintroduced the system, following which mass protests began in early July as many young people feel they are at a disadvantage due to it.

The Supreme Court on Sunday weakened the plan for reintroducing the system. However, student leaders are seemingly not satisfied with the changes.

Armed forces have been deployed across the country as police could not bring the riots under control. Internet has been restricted in the country since Thursday. -BW

IN TURMOIL

Are we seeing the end of Economic Community of West African States?

ACCRA: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been facing turmoil following the recent exits of Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali from the bloc. The three countries, which are all currently under military rule, formed a new security alliance last September, known as the Alliance of Sahel States, after cutting their ties with ECOWAS.

The decision of exit the bloc came in protest of ECOWAS' policy of condemning the coups that took place in those countries and imposing sanctions, including the threat of military intervention.

Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have said they will use their new union to fight off any external aggression.

A history of mixed messages from ECOWAS

Adib Saani, a foreign policy and security analyst at the Jaticay Center for Human Security and Peace Building in Accra, Ghana, told DW that this standoff followed the bloc's past failure to deal with autocratic regimes which had eroded its diplomatic influence over the years.

"ECOWAS has a protocol on governance, elections and security. Unfortunately for many years on, there have been [...] dictatorial tendencies exhibited by certain leaders within the subregion which ECOWAS did nothing



about," he said, adding that this lack of intervention directly contributed to military regimes taking the liberty "to impose themselves on the people."

Since 2020, there have been six successful coups and two attempts in West Africa.

Who is to blame for instability in West Africa?

Fidel Amakye Owusu, an international relations and security analyst working for Riley Risk, believes, however, that ECOWAS' structures, policies and protocols cannot be blamed for recent instabilities in the region.

"The main reason for these coups wasn't coming the side of ECOWAS. It came from insecurity, violence extremism that had

taken hold in northern Mali and was spreading its tentacles in the region," he said. "ECOWAS was incapable of preventing [these] coups."

But Owusu stressed that ECOWAS did fail in its response to these developments: the bloc's protocol stipulates that it is to condemn coups and impose sanctions. However, rather than serving as a deterrent to other countries, this protocol appears to have failed in the past four years.

"[ECOWAS] didn't handle the situation very well," he said, highlighting that the threat to invade Niger after its military takeover was a particularly "bad move."

"They knew very well that they could not prosecute, and that really rendered them as toothless

bulldog," Owusu explained, stressing that this move was the final straw that triggered Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso to break away from the bloc in January.

ECOWAS has for years been trying to push through several reforms to make the organization more viable and effective. According to Saani, however, the bloc is yet to live up to that vision, with weak national governments showing even weaker commitment to the bloc.

"It has been a challenge because of the lack of commitment from member states. ECOWAS' success rate depends on commitment demonstrated by the member states," he said. "[F]or ECOWAS to succeed would largely depend on the governments. ECOWAS has

to work on harnessing trust and confidence between the entity and West Africans."

Owusu agreed on the need for good governance in West Africa, stressing that this lack of leadership is most visible when people are seen celebrating coups when they happen. "These are nostalgic feelings; people have come to feel that the military were in the past more effective than civilian leaders," he said.

Saani added that "to a large extent, ECOWAS has lost a great deal of legitimacy," with "many West Africans calling it a presidents' club rather than [a bloc] representing the interest of [...] citizens."

ECOWAS leaders have reacted to this loss in esteem, hoping to change hearts and minds. At their latest summit in Nigeria earlier this month, they agreed to seek solutions and address the sense of mistrust in leaders within the region.

They also vowed to continue talks with Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali in hopes of winning them back.

'Disastrous' consequences if ECOWAS fails

Saani believes that despite its many challenges, ECOWAS remains the most viable union to foster both economic growth and political stability in West Africa.

In addition to seeking "to unite

all the countries within the West African subcontinent under one economic umbrella," ECOWAS also still holds a certain amount of "military leverage to restore some level of security within the subregion," he said.

Saani pointed out that when Sierra Leone and Liberia faced security crises over their civil wars, ECOWAS deployed troops to help tackle those situations.

"It was ECOWAS that intervened to ensure that peace was restored in these countries and many others over the years," he said.

Owusu shared the same view, emphasizing that "ECOWAS took initiative when the whole world was bowing out [...] and they solved the problem."

However, in order to ensure the future of the bloc, Owusu said ECOWAS has to undergo further reforms and produce strong leaders who are committed to the aspirations of the bloc.

Saani, meanwhile, said he fears that if ECOWAS were to disintegrate, "it would be chaotic" and "disastrous" for all of West Africa.

"Businesses would come to a halt. If ECOWAS doesn't exit, it means the borders are shut. You would need visas, and you have to go through a protracted customs procedure to get goods in and out," he warned. "I think that it is better with ECOWAS than without ECOWAS." -BW

Kamala Harris moves to secure support for her White House bid



Many Democratic lawmakers have rallied behind Harris candidature

WASHINGTON, DC: Vice President Kamala Harris swiftly moved to secure support for her White House bid shortly after President Joe Biden announced his decision not to seek re-election, The Hill reported.

On Sunday, Harris engaged with key figures on Capitol Hill, including Rep Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash) of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Rep Nanette Barragan (D-Calif) of the Con-



gressional Hispanic Caucus, and Rep Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH) of the New Democrat Coalition, all of whom have already endorsed her candidature.

Harris also connected with Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wis.), who enthusiastically shared on social media platform X, "She is ready to

win in Wisconsin!!!!"

Similarly, Rep Jared Huffman (D-Calif) confirmed he had been in touch with Harris's staff, noting, "Her team is fully activated, phones are ringing, emails are blowing up, this thing is rolling." He told The Hill in a brief interview Sunday, "This has taken off like a rocket ship," and

summed up the sentiment of their conversation as, "Let's roll."

This concentrated effort on Capitol Hill underscores Harris's strategy to rapidly advance her presidential campaign following Biden's unexpected withdrawal from the race amidst mounting pressure after a contentious debate performance last month.

Initially defiant about stepping aside, Biden ultimately reversed course on Sunday and swiftly threw his support behind Harris.

"My very first decision as the party nominee in 2020 was to pick Kamala Harris as my vice president. And it's been the best decision I've made," Biden said on X. "Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year."

In response to Biden's endorsement, Harris expressed gratitude, stating in a released statement, "I am honoured to have the President's endorsement, and my intention is to earn and win this nomination."

Sources familiar with Harris's plans indicate she will maintain an aggressive travel schedule, consistent with her recent campaign efforts. Major Democratic PACs, including the AAPI Victory Fund, the Collective PAC, and the Latino Victory Fund, also endorsed Harris on Sunday, signalling a broadening coalition of support. The infrastructure of the Biden campaign is swiftly pivoting to bolster Harris's efforts.

With less than a month until the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Harris faces a pivotal moment. While many Democratic lawmakers have rallied behind her candidature, notable figures like former Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif), Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), and former President Barack Obama have lauded Biden without explicitly endorsing Harris, prompting speculation, as reported by The Hill. -**uw**



Biden was not fit to run for president, says Trump

WASHINGTON, DC: Shortly after Joe Biden ended his reelection bid, Republican candidate Donald Trump said that the incumbent president was "not fit to run" and "is certainly not fit to serve." The former president further said Biden "only attained the position of president by lies and fake news."

"Crooked Joe Biden was not fit to run for President, and is certainly not fit to serve - And never was! He only attained the position of President by lies, Fake News, and not leaving his Basement," Trump said in a statement posted on his Truth Social network.

Trump, 78, added, "All those around him, including his Doctor and the Media, knew that he wasn't capable of being President, and he wasn't - And now, look what he's done to our Country, with millions of people coming across our Border, totally unchecked and unvetted, many from prisons, mental institutions, and record numbers of terrorists. We will suffer greatly because of his presidency, but we will remedy the damage he has done very quickly. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

Trump's statement came after Biden announced his decision to not seek re-election in the "best interest" of the Democratic Party and the country. He said that he will speak to the nation later this week in more detail. -**ANI**

TRUE PATRIOT

Democrats heap praise on Biden after he quits race

WASHINGTON, DC: Democratic Party leaders have lavished President Joe Biden with praise, calling him the "most accomplished," "true patriot", and "consequential leader" in American history, following his announcement to end his re-election bid just months before the November election.

US Representative Nancy Pelosi, who reportedly was one of several lawmakers nudging Biden to withdraw, has called Biden a "patriotic American" who has always put the US first.



Taking to X, Pelosi stated, "President Joe Biden is a patriotic American who has always put our country first. His legacy of vision, values and leadership make him one of the most consequential Presidents in American history. With love and gratitude to President Biden for always believing in the promise of America and giving people the opportunity to reach their fulfillment. God blessed America with Joe Biden's greatness and goodness."

Former US President Bill Clinton and former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also praised Biden's service and endorsed US Vice President Kamala Harris as the presidential nominee for the Democratic Party.

"President Biden has capped his extraordinary career of service with a Presidency that has lifted America out of an unprecedented pandemic, created millions of new jobs, rebuilt a battered economy, strengthened our democracy, and restored our standing in the world. By any measure, he has advanced

our founders' charge to build a more perfect union and his own stated goal of restoring the soul of our nation. We join millions of Americans in thanking President Biden for all he has accomplished, standing up for America time and again, with his North Star always being what's best for the country," Bill and Hillary said in a statement posted on X.

In the joint statement, Bill Clinton and his wife, Hillary Clinton, warned about the threat posed by former US President Donald Trump's second term. -**uw**

CLIMATE CHANGE

Global Media Forum on ‘Unmasking false narratives’ concludes in Azerbaijan

Times News Service

SHUSHA (AZERBAIJAN): Shusha, a major centre of Azerbaijani culture and music, saw the culmination of the II Global Media Forum on Tuesday (July 22, 2024).

Now in its second year, the Forum attracted an international audience, and provided an opportunity to meet with COP29 Presidency officials. The Forum offered ample opportunities to discuss questions relevant to the COP preparations and other vital issues on supporting the global fight against climate change.

The opening ceremony of the second Shusha Global Media Forum themed "Unmasking False Narratives: Confronting Disinformation" was held on July 20.

The Forum featured a panel session dealing with policy and initiatives for building resilient societies against disinformation. The Forum has also sparked crucial conversations and fostered partnerships among media professionals worldwide, paving the way for a more informed and resilient global media landscape.

The session focused on strategies and initiatives to establish sustainable communities resilient against disinformation. Discussions aimed at addressing the global threat of disinformation included the establishment of a more robust online media ecosystem and the role of media in actively combating disinformation across various platforms and formats.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the Forum and answered the questions raised by the media professionals and experts. Rebecca McLaughlin-Eastham, a TV anchor and Executive Producer, representing Euronews TV Channel was the moderator of the session.

Participants from more than 50 countries here in Shusha to drill down into unmasking false narratives

Speaking at the event President Ilham Aliyev said: It's a big honour to address this distinguished audience. I was informed that we have delegations from 49 countries, plus host country journalists - media representatives from Azerbaijan. So, in total, 50 countries have gathered here in Karabakh for the second time to address the issues



you already described."

Elaborating about the developments in the region and in the country since the last Shusha Forum, "I think it would take all the time of our session if I start to name what happened, not only in the area of media but also in general in the country and the region. As far as the region of the Southern Caucasus is concerned, I would say that we are now facing a historical transformation of the region with historical, geopolitical changes. Traditional alliances are a little bit under the phase of deterioration."

New formats of cooperation emerge. Of course, the full restoration of our sovereignty last September was the key event not only between the 1st and 2nd forums but in our modern history in general. So, a lot of things have happened, and hopefully, all these developments will lead to a more predictable situation in the region, the President said.

"I think all what we need is to feel ourselves, I mean, the peoples of the region on the safe side. There have been enough wars, enough confrontations, and as you already mentioned, what you've seen coming from Fuzuli Airport to here is an enormous reconstruction program we are implementing, and what you've seen is just maybe 5 percent of what is going on in the region of Karabakh and East Zangazur. So, we are very optimistic. I would say that the whole society of Azerbaijan is optimistic and enthusiastic. And this is a good driver. I think the main driver for any country to succeed is the mood of society, its comfort and its expectations. Especially, when so-

cieties see that what they strived for, for so many years, has become a reality.

Speaking about Azerbaijan's substantial progress in its renewables sector, President Ilham Aliyev said, "We inaugurated the first solar power station of 230 megawatts. Now, the construction of a wind power station of 240 megawatts is underway. Soon, we will enjoy the groundbreaking ceremony for the third solar power station of 240 megawatts. The first was done by Masdar, the second, which is now under construction, is ACWA Power, and the third, which we expect to start with BP - the leading energy companies of the world."

"Above that, last month in Baku, we had the groundbreaking ceremony for three solar and wind power stations with a total capacity of one gigawatt. So, we are doing a lot of that. We have great potential—both technical and economic. The technical potential of offshore wind power in Azerbaijan is 157 gigawatts based on IFC, which is part of the World Bank institution. The economic potential of onshore solar and wind is 27 gigawatts, which clearly indicates how much we can generate. It's enormous," the President added.

When asked about the future of the media industry and the role of artificial intelligence President Ilham Aliyev said, it might be difficult for me to compete with such venerable representatives of the media industry here and say something they do not know. But as far as artificial intelligence is concerned, yes, this is a topic that is already entering a



What is COP29?

Times News Service

SHUSHA: The Conference of the Parties (COP), is held annually, with the Presidency rotating between the five recognised UN regions.

This year, Azerbaijan has been selected as the Presidency of the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29), to be hosted in Baku this November. Azerbaijan has a strong track record of hosting international events and has chosen Baku Stadium as the venue for COP29.

To deliver a process that is transparent, impartial and inclusive, the COP29 Presidency has developed a plan based on two mutually reinforcing pillars to enhance ambition and enable action. The UNFCCC website provides more details explaining what COP is, the COP process, the issues under discussion and the multilateral efforts already underway. Further details are available on the UNFCCC website.

COP29 Green Zone
The Green Zone serves as a

melting pot for a diverse group of stakeholders: from the general public and private enterprises to media personnel, scholars, youth, indigenous communities, NGOs, civil society, and official Blue Zone representatives.

Operated and established by the COP29 Presidency, Green Zone provides a dynamic forum for various participants to make their perspectives known. It's a hub for engaging discussions, panels, and demonstrations showcasing both current innovations and potential solutions for combating climate change. The concept behind the Green Zone under the guidance of the COP29 Presidency emphasizes the essential collaboration between government bodies and all stakeholders in tackling climate issues.

Here, stakeholders have the opportunity to present their innovative solutions and contributions towards addressing climate challenges. Their inventions, solutions, and entrepreneurial spirit are crucial to the success of COP29 in Azerbaijan.

someone may not read it, or perhaps it is given when it is already too late. Because it is very difficult to detect such fake news right away. You discover it after some time, and during this time people already believed it. So far this is of a non-fatal nature. In other words, someone just wants to make money on this. Artificial intelligence is used to make announcements on my behalf: invest money here, invest money here. But if this goes on like this, then they may make other announcements tomorrow - declare war, for example, on my behalf. And someone may believe it and may take some other action," he added.

"I hope that an international mechanism can be developed. And this will not be perceived in any way as some kind of infringement of the freedom of speech, etc. - an international mechanism either at the level of an international organization, the UN, I don't know, the G20, or some key countries in order to put an end to this. This is a huge threat. And thank you for bringing up this topic, President Ilham Aliyev said.

Panel discussions
Four panel discussion were held during the two-day event and with the first one being titled 'Impact Assessment: Understanding the Reach of Disinformation' The 2nd panel discussion on 'Policy and Initiatives to Build More Resilient Society to Disinformation', the 3rd panel discussion was on 'AI's Impact on Reality, Media and Disinformation: Promoting Media Literacy', and the 4th panel discussion was on 'Climate Action and Media'.

Elnur Soltanov, Azerbaijan's Deputy Minister of Energy and the Chief Executive Officer of COP29, also made a special presentation titled 'Solidarity for a Green World-COP29'.

The Forum, attended by over 150 foreign guests from around 50 countries, including news agencies of 30 countries, three international organisations, and 82 media entities, provided a platform for joint discussions and actions among participants.

The first Shusha Global Media Forum themed "New Media in the Era of the 4th Industrial Revolution" was held on July 21-23, 2023.

completely new plane now. From time to time, official reports are published in competent sources in Azerbaijan claiming that some business projects are allegedly announced on my behalf, but this

has absolutely nothing to do with me or Azerbaijan as a whole.

"Unfortunately, many people believe this. And it is hard to say what to do about it. Because someone may read a refutation, but

SPORTS

INDIA CRICKET TEAM HEAD COACH

‘Big shoes to fill’, says Gambhir



MUMBAI: As Gautam Gambhir takes charge of Team India as the head coach, he believes he has big shoes to fill as he steps into a role previously held by the likes of Rahul Dravid and Ravi Shastri.

“The most important thing is that they will always have my back. Aim to make it a happy and secure dressing room. I am taking over a very successful team. Runner-ups in the World Test Championship and 50-overs World Cup. I have big shoes to fill and looking forward to it,” Gambhir said at a press conference in Mumbai on Monday.

Gambhir will have to work with a dressing room full of stars at least when the ODI’s get underway with Team India skipper Rohit Sharma and star batsman Virat Kohli joining the team.

Gambhir said he has a good relationship with Virat Kohli.

“I share a great relationship with Virat Kohli, we exchange messages - he is world class, world-class batter, I have told you many times that we both will work hard for Team India & make 140 crore people proud,” he said.

“Both Virat and Rohit have lots of cricket left, they are world class, any team would have both of them - there is the Champions Trophy, Australia series, then if fitness goes well then the 2027 World Cup,” he added.

Gambhir touched on the way he wants to work with India’s players and what they can expect from him. “It is very simple,” he said. “It is important to give players freedom - that’s what I believe in - and not have a relationship between a head coach and a player.

“The best relationship is one built on trust. The most impor-

tant thing is they’ll always have my backing. I don’t complicate too many things. I am taking over a very, very successful team - India are T20 world champions, have been runners-up in the World Test Championship and the 50-overs World Cup.”

Gambhir’s tenure begins on July 27 with India’s white-ball tour of Sri Lanka. This is his first time as head coach of a team, although he has served as a mentor in the IPL, with both Lucknow Super Giants and the reigning champions Kolkata Knight Riders. In his playing days, he was an excellent opening batter with an international career that spanned 13 years and peaked with World Cup wins in 2007 and 2011.

“My learning has been simple - it has been all about winning,” he said. “I don’t deviate from something. We are in a profession where there can be only one winner. We try and play fair, we try and play hard, and try to come back in a winning dressing room and a happy dressing room.

“A happy dressing room is a winning dressing room. Ultimately it is the players’ team, the support staff is there to try and get the maximum out of their potential. Sometimes international cricket can be tough, it can be insecure as well because only 15 can be picked. It is the job of support staff to keep them happy.”

For the tour of Sri Lanka, Gambhir will have Abhishek Nayar and Ryan ten Doeschate as assistant coaches and Sairaj Bahutule as the bowling coach. T Dilip, so far, is the only one to reprise his role from the previous regime. He will be the fielding coach. - Agencies

England dismantle WI to win Test and series

An hour of dominating cricket from England late on day four ended West Indies’ hopes of putting up a fight in their pursuit of 385 as Bashir picked a five-wicket haul



NOTTINGHAM: Shoaib Bashir’s first five-wicket haul on English soil sealed victory inside four days for the hosts, after Joe Root and Harry Brook had set England up against West Indies in the second Test at Trent Bridge on Sunday.

Root and Brook each scored centuries before the hosts were bowled out for 425 in their second innings - the first time in England’s history that they had scored 400 in both innings of a Test - setting West Indies a target of 385.

Then, at 20 years and 282 days, off-spinner Bashir became the youngest England bowler to take a five-wicket haul in a men’s Test at home, beating the previous record of just-retired seamer James Anderson. His 5 for 41 gave England the win, by 241 runs, and an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series being played for the Richards-Botham Trophy.

Set 385 to win or four sessions to save the game, West Indies disintegrated from 61-0 to 82-5 in a manic blur of five wickets in six overs.

Chris Woakes twice found the edge to remove openers Mikyle Louis and Kraigg Brathwaite, and off-spinner Shoaib Bashir bowled a magical spell to claim 3-8 in 15 deliveries.

From there, the only question was whether the game would last until Monday. Mark Wood bounced out Kevin Sinclair, Gus Atkinson struck twice in three balls and Bashir took the final two

wickets to end with 5-41. West Indies were 143 all out and beaten by 241 runs.

All this came after Joe Root and Harry Brook each made centuries to lay the platform for England’s victory push.

Root’s 122 was his 32nd Test hundred, one short of Sir Alastair Cook’s England record, while Brook added 109 for his first Test ton in this country.

West Indies’ target might have been larger had England not lost 7-96, but the regular fall of home wickets also gave Ben Stokes’ side enough time to wrap up the game with a day to spare.

It gives England their first series win since the tour of Pakistan in 2022. They will look for a 3-0 clean sweep when the final Test begins at Edgbaston on Friday, and have named an unchanged squad.

The rapid way this match unravelled in the final session of the fourth day was at odds with everything that came before, when these teams had wrestled for control.

In the end, the target always felt likely to be well beyond them, despite the great spirit they have shown in responding to a heavy first Test defeat at Lord’s and the fact the pitch showed no huge sign of deteriorating until West Indies began their chase.

Woakes exploited some uncertain footwork, while Bashir hinted at why England have chosen him ahead of Somerset team-mate Jack Leach.

By this point, free entry for the fifth day had been offered to spectators, much like the last men’s Test at this ground, when England thrillingly beat New Zealand in 2022 on the day their Bazball style was born.

The fifth day was not required, but the outcome is the same: an England win and an unassailable 2-0 series lead.

Given the conditions, England might have been expecting a similar slog to the first innings, when they needed almost 112 overs to dismiss West Indies for 457.

Instead, this was a collective display of brilliance by the home attack, who dismantled the Windies in 36.1 overs of mayhem after tea.

Brathwaite in particular had looked in solid touch for 47 in his opening stand of 61 with Louis, but once Louis was drawn into an edge by Woakes, the implosion was swift and dramatic.

Kirk McKenzie somehow edged a Bashir half-tracker to wicketkeeper Jamie Smith, while Brathwaite’s edge off was almost a replay of Louis’ dismissal to really expose the tourists. Kavem Hodge was lbw playing back to Bashir, who then found gorgeous turn to draw the edge of left-hander Alick Athanaze. West Indies had lost 5-21.

The four-day finish was a possibility, made a reality when fleeting resistance from Sinclair was ended by a brutal bouncer in another

terrifying spell from Wood.

Atkinson pinned Joshua da Silva lbw and scuttled one through Alzarri Joseph before Bashir produced his best, one that turned to end Jason Holder’s defiance on 37.

When last man Shamar Joseph was bowled having a swipe, 20-year-old Bashir became the youngest England bowler to take a five-wicket haul in a home Test and the first spinner to take five in an innings at Trent Bridge since 2006.

West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite, speaking to *BBC Test Match Special (TMS)* said: “It’s a tough loss, we pretty much lost 10 wickets in a session. It’s not good enough. “It was obviously better than Lord’s but with the ball we weren’t as consistent as we should have been.”

England captain Ben Stokes talking to *TMS*: “I didn’t see it happening that quickly after the opening partnership. You could see at the end of our innings the wicket started misbehaving, I thought the way we fought back after that first wicket was impressive.

“I think we can get better, really looking forward to the next four matches.”

Brief scores: England: 416 (Pope 121, Duckett 71, Stokes 69) and 425 (Root 122, Brook 109, Duckett 76, Pope 51, Seales 4-97) beat West Indies 457 (Hodge 120, Da Silva 82*, Athanaze 82, Woakes 4-84) and 143 (Brathwaite 47, Bashir 5-41) by 241 runs. - Agencies

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by September 2024 reaching \$82.33, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$2.06 from the price of Friday, which was \$84.39. - **OWA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) dropped 51.4 points, comprising a decline by 1.10% to close at 4631.43 points, compared to the last session, which stood at (4682.80) points.



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CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR13.6 million

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds



MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR13.6 million by a way of allotting treasury bills on Monday.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR5 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.660 for every OMR100, and the mini-

mum accepted price arrived at OMR99.660 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.43214 per cent and 4.44726 per cent, respectively.

Whereas, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR4.6 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.736 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.730 per OMR100. The

average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.07129 per cent and 5.13623 per cent, respectively.

While, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR4 million, for a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price reached OMR97.455 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR97.455 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.10398 per cent

and 5.23727 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest

rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 6.00 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.50 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. -**OWA**

FEDERAL RESERVE

Fed may be on cusp of emerging from 'elevated' inflation blues

WASHINGTON: In September 2021, after absorbing three months of price hikes that were more than double the Federal Reserve's 2% target, US central bank staff and policymakers shifted from their more passive tone about inflation and began describing it as "elevated."

Triggered after the personal consumption expenditures price index used by the Fed to set its inflation target topped 4% in May, June and July of that year, the elevated inflation description remains in the rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee's policy statement to this day, even with the PCE now down to 2.6% and, it seems, still falling.

The Fed's policy meeting next week may finally usher the word out the door. If so, it would mark the strongest signal yet that the central bank plans to cut interest rates as soon as September and begin the easing part of its monetary policy cycle, something investors now see as a near-certainty. Fed staff stopped describing inflation as elevated in January after the PCE fell below 3%, and policymakers heading into the July 30-31 meeting noted inflation was slowing more broadly. -**BNA**

IN 2024-25

India to remain fastest growing major economy

NEW DELHI: India is poised to remain the fastest-growing major economy in 2024-25, Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran said in a press conference after the tabling of the Economic Survey in the Parliament on Monday.

The Economic Survey tabled projected India to grow at 6.5-7.0 per cent in 2024-25.

Global institutions, including IMF, OECD, World Bank, S&P, ADB, and Fitch, have projected India to grow in a range of 6.6-7.2 per cent.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its latest outlook, has raised India's growth projections for 2024 from 6.8 per cent earlier to 7 per cent, with the country maintaining the fastest-growing status in emerging markets and developing economies.

According to official data of the Indian government, the country's GDP grew at an impressive 8.2 per cent during the financial year 2023-24. India's economy grew 7.2 per cent in 2022-23 and 8.7 per cent in 2021-22 respectively.

Further, the CEA in his press conference projected that India's per capita income is expected to increase from around Rs 2 lakh in 2022-23 to Rs 14.9 lakh in 2046-47.

Household savings

Further, CEA said household savings of Indians in physical assets have been increasing over the past three financial years through 2023-24.

The CEA, addressing the press conference, said household savings in physical assets rose from 8 per cent in 2020-21 to 12.9 per cent in 2022-23.

"Households are not in distress, they are investing in financial assets that have done very well. Financial assets of households are not marked to market so households are doing quite

According to official data of the Indian government, the country's GDP grew at an impressive 8.2 per cent during the financial year 2023-24. India's economy grew 7.2 per cent in 2022-23 and 8.7 per cent in 2021-22 respectively

well in the aggregate," he said.

India needs both banks and capital markets to provide the required finances sourced from a sustained high level of household savings, according to the Survey.

Economic survey

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday tabled the economic survey in Parliament, a day ahead of the full Budget presentation for 2024-25. The Economic Survey document, prepared by the Economic Division of the Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance and formulated under the supervision of the chief economic adviser, gives insights into the state of the economy and various indicators of 2023-24 (April-March) and some outlook for the current year.

The Economy Survey document also gave some idea about the tone and texture of the actual Budget for 2024-25, to be presented on Tuesday. -**ANI**

INVESTMENT CRAZE IS FAR FROM OVER

Investing in fossils: The appeal and challenges of owning dinosaur fossil

BRUSSELS: Who wouldn't want a T. rex? You can scare the neighbors with one. Or you can charge admission to see it. Plus, they are extremely rare and will only go up in value, right? But are fossilized bones really a good investment?

Investing in ancient specimens is not for everyone and there are a few things to think about. One good thing is they are hard to steal. A triceratops skull wouldn't fit in a burglar's backpack. This also means they are hard to move around, and you'll need lots of space.

The Natural History Museum Abu Dhabi surely had all this in mind when it bid \$31.8 million (€29.8 million) for the 67-million-year-old Stan the T. rex at a Christie's auction in 2020. It was the most expensive fossil ever sold at auction up to that point and well above its \$6-8 million estimate.

The museum, which is set to open in 2025, has the resources to display the 37-foot-long (11 meters), 13-foot-tall male skeleton. Made up of 188 bones with additional cast elements, it was originally found in South Dakota in 1987. Most of the 50-plus Tyrannosaurus rex skeletons discovered since 1902 are in natural history museums, which is not many when considering that around 2.5 billion of them roamed Earth over a 2.4-million-year period.

Buyers beware of dino-mania

Christie's isn't the only place to get expensive bones. Sotheby's, Drouot and Heritage Auctions have also exceeded the million-dollar mark with recent sales, sometimes when only a fraction of the original bones were available.

Yet two auctions in late 2022 caused concern. Christie's stopped the planned sale of a T. rex days before it was set to hit the market in Hong Kong. That possible \$25-million sale was halted after experts highlighted the number of



replica bones included as part of the skeleton.

Using reproductions to complete skeletons is quite common. A few weeks later there was another major disappointment. A T. rex that Sotheby's estimated could bring in \$20 million sold for a lowly \$6.1 million.

But on July 17, 2024, Sotheby's turned the tide and made up for this by auctioning the remains of a stegosaurus dubbed "Apex" for a record-breaking \$44.6 million, well above its estimate of \$4-6 million.

Authenticity, provenance and paperwork

There are many smaller options for buying fossils besides a flashy T. rex, stegosaurus or triceratops. Auction houses, dealers and specialty shops are trying to convince collectors and investors to look closer at natural history specimens like fossilized eggs, oversized teeth, meteorites, minerals or even strands of mammoth hair. Though they are not as eye-catching as a full-scale dino, they are still a part of history and in some cases quite rare.

"Fossils are rare because certain conditions need to be present

in order for a plant or animal to be preserved," Claudia Florian, consulting director of Bonhams' natural history department in Los Angeles, told DW. "The organism needs to undergo a rapid burial in an undisturbed fashion so that it is preserved and fossilized." Add to that a sense of adventure and the enormous amount of backbreaking work involved in finding and excavating such fossils and they become even more intriguing.

In a short tutorial, Bonhams laid out some tips for buyers. Quality, how well something is preserved and completeness are major factors to take into account. Authenticity, provenance and paperwork proving that a specimen was legally excavated are also important.

"Rarity, completeness and condition can affect pricing at auction," said Florian who has over 39 years of experience. "Fossils, particularly the highly aesthetic ones sold at public auction, are available in short supply and are likely to increase in value over the long term."

During the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic, people started to invest with gusto in nontraditional assets like crypto-

currencies, wine, sneakers, NFTs (nonfungible tokens), or collectibles and sports cards. Now that things are slowly getting back to normal, the question is will investors go back to traditional assets and leave others behind?

Seeing the beauty in old bones

Bonhams, which now has 14 sale-rooms around the world, is trying to make inroads into the natural history market. In 2022, their auctions brought in over \$1 billion for the first time, a 27% increase over the previous year. Of the total, around \$4 million came from its 11 natural history auctions, three of which included fossils.

Florian is cautiously optimistic yet sees big opportunities. "The fossil market has seen a large upswing in pricing during the last three to five years due to increased interest on the part of the public and consequently increased demand," she said. But warns, "there may be a levelling off in the next year or two at the wholesale and public auction level, particularly if there is an economic slowdown or recession." -**DW**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

The trading value yesterday stood at OMR4,591,837, comprising a surge by 262.2 per cent, compared to the last session, which stood at OMR1,267,650



MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) yesterday dropped 51.4 points, comprising a decline by 1.10 per cent to close at 4631.43 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4682.80 points. The trading value yesterday stood at OMR4,591,837, comprising a surge by 262.2 per cent, compared to the last session, which stood at OMR1,267,650. The report released by MSX

pointed out that the market value went down by 0.307 per cent to reach about OMR24.39 billion. The report added that the value of shares bought by non-Omani investors reached OMR623,000, comprising 13.58 per cent. The value of shares sold by non-Omani investors reached OMR1,799,000, comprising 39.17 per cent. The net non-Omani investment decreased by 25.59 per cent to OMR1,175,000. — **DNA**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,687.37	4,631.14	4,631.43	4,682.80	-51.37	-1.10
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,605.06	7,514.32	7,514.23	7,605.06	-86.83	-1.14
Industry Index	5,999.02	5,897.07	5,934.40	5,984.32	-49.91	-0.83
Services Index	1,832.85	1,817.31	1,819.20	1,825.03	-5.83	-0.32
MSX Shariah Index	450.17	446.27	446.43	450.56	-4.13	-0.92
MSX TRI INDEX	6,511.23	6,433.12	6,433.52	6,504.88	-71.36	-1.10
FINANCIAL TRI IDX	8,640.13	8,537.04	8,541.48	8,640.13	-98.65	-1.14
INDUSTRIAL TRI IDX	6,921.45	6,803.82	6,846.89	6,904.48	-57.59	-0.83
SERVICES TRI IDX	2,125.56	2,107.54	2,109.73	2,116.49	-6.76	-0.32
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
28,106,031	4,591,837	835	24,390,212,615	6	30	15	51

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JULY 22

ISINSECURITY NAMEVOLUMETURNOVERTRADESOPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PRCLOSE PRICEPREV. CLOSEDIFF (RD)DIFF %LAST PDLAST BDLAST OFFERPAV. VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	500	199	1	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.398	0.390	0.008	2.051	0.398	0.392	0.398	0.100	131,687,239
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	34,686	3,584	7	0.105	0.107	0.103	0.105	0.103	0.002	1.942	0.105	0.100	0.108	0.100	100,230,055
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	22,000	2,508	3	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.000	0.000	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.100	17,100,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,157	997	2	0.865	0.865	0.855	0.855	0.855	0.000	0.825	0.800	0.825	0.800	0.100	78,375,000
OM0000003969	QOEDCO	402,397	114,972	24	0.285	0.287	0.284	0.285	0.285	0.000	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.100	185,512,106
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	33,424	2,493	8	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.074	0.075	0.100	52,866,069	
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	180,252	180,444	54	1.002	1.009	0.997	1.000	1.002	-0.002	-0.200	1.000	0.997	1.000	0.100	750,000,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	319	116	2	0.364	0.364	0.364	0.364	0.365	-0.001	-0.274	0.364	0.364	0.364	0.100	86,053,240
OM0000007796	BANK MUSCAT	6,758,684	1,690,077	56	0.251	0.251	0.249	0.250	0.251	-0.001	-0.368	0.250	0.249	0.250	0.100	1,676,599,286
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	18,000	1,392	7	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.078	-0.001	-1.282	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.100	9,384,375
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	1,442,150	108,896	34	0.077	0.077	0.075	0.076	0.077	-0.001	-1.299	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.100	15,200,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	672,981	197,575	45	0.296	0.296	0.293	0.293	0.297	-0.004	-1.347	0.293	0.292	0.300	0.100	225,668,600
OM0000004925	ALBATRAH POWER	831,912	62,190	52	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.074	-0.001	-1.351	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.100	45,286,782
OM0000009072	QO GAS NETWORKS	3,931,951	552,181	179	0.140	0.141	0.139	0.139	0.141	-0.002	-1.418	0.139	0.139	0.142	0.100	601,956,725
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	104,500	5,958	5	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.059	-0.001	-1.695	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.100	20,655,383
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	7,817,134	1,071,368	96	0.138	0.138	0.134	0.135	0.138	-0.003	-2.174	0.135	0.135	0.136	0.100	752,928,246
OM0000004789	MADINA TAKAFUL	587,650	45,252	33	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.079	-0.002	-2.532	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.100	13,475,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	23,000	6,379	3	0.278	0.278	0.277	0.277	0.285	-0.008	-2.807	0.277	0.273	0.282	0.100	34,596,735
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	29,200	9,637	10	0.338	0.338	0.330	0.330	0.340	-0.010	-2.941	0.330	0.321	0.330	0.100	220,560,591
OM0000002440	AL SHARGIYA INVESTMENT HO	27,904	2,027	5	0.074	0.074	0.071	0.071	0.074	-0.003	-4.054	0.071	0.072	0.075	0.100	6,390,000
Total	30	22,939,801	4,058,244	616												

Parallel Market

OM0000001480	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	110,517	57,819	17	0.519	0.525	0.519	0.525	0.510	0.015	2.941	0.525	0.525	0.540	0.100	82,687,500
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	2,820,072	173,596	42	0.061	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.061	0.001	1.639	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.100	90,861,291
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	19,758	1,473	5	0.075	0.075	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.001	1.370	0.074	0.074	0.075	0.100	15,701,320
OM0000001095	DHOFAIR INSURANCE	5,000	1,050	3	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.210	0.000	0.000	0.210	0.201	0.210	0.100	23,678,042
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	1,000	1,100	1	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.100	1.100	0.000	0.000	1.100	1.100	1.150	0.100	55,000,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	60,000	9,000	3	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.147	0.154	0.100	352,448,620
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	490,335	50,977	18	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.104	0.105	0.100	232,643,115
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	90,000	12,780	6	0.141	0.142	0.141	0.142	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.141	0.142	0.100	237,056,220
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,000	90	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.095	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	38,646	4,828	11	0.124	0.125	0.124	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.125	0.129	0.100	9,440,250
OM0000002286	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	500	114	1	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.229	-0.001	-0.437	0.228	0.210	0.228	0.100	15,954,574
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	8,300	963	7	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.117	-0.001	-0.855	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.100	58,940,011
OM0000003281	TAAQEER FINANCE	48,000	4,992	4	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.105	-0.001	-0.952	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.100	28,193,412
OM0000008447	OMAN RETT FUND	146,000	9,198	10	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.064	-0.001	-1.563	0.063	0.063	0.064	0.100	30,922,692
OM0000001902	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	17,000	884	3	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.053	-0.001	-1.887	0.052	0.050	0.052	0.100	4,420,000
OM0000003000	ALMAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	250	256	1	1.025	1.025	1.025	1.025	1.050	-0.025	-2.381	1.025	1.025	1.050	0.100	70,725,000
OM0000007407	DHOFAIR GENERATING	70,000	4,900	8	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.072	-0.002	-2.778	0.070	0.070	0.071	0.100	15,556,800
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	20	58	1	2.900	2.900	2.900	2.900	2.900	0.000	-3.010	2.900	2.900	2.900	0.100	260,130,000
OM0000005006	ALMAHA CERAMICS	2,129	331	2	0.156	0.156	0.155	0.155	0.160	-0.005	-3.125	0.155	0.155	0.178	0.100	8,525,000
OM0000003531	GALPAC ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	982,229	145,184	39	0.159	0.159	0.150	0.150	0.155	-0.005	-3.226	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.100	30,447,967
OM0000003265	NATIONAL DETERGENT	20,000	15,903	5	0.700	0.700	0.690	0.690	0.715	-0.025	-3.497	0.690	0.690	0.700	0.100	13,800,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAIR	1,000	154	1	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.154	0.160	-0.006	-3.750	0.154	0.145	0.160	0.100	461,438,121
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	27,841	9,414	9	0.340	0.350	0.324	0.335	0.350	-0.015	-4.286	0.335	0.335	0.385	0.100	27,269,921
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSURANCE	12,024	2,044	1	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.187	-0.017	-9.091	0.170	0.171	0.186	0.100	27,407,157
Total	24	4,971,621	508,088	199												

Oil prices rise as investors look for US rate cuts

TOKYO: Oil prices rose in early trade on Monday as investors keep a lookout for signs of a rate-cut cycle expected to begin as soon as September. Brent crude prices were up 48 cents, or 0.57 per cent, at \$83.10 a barrel by 0035 GMT, and US West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 42 cents, or 0.52 per cent, to \$80.55. The US Federal Re-

serve will next hold a Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting on interest rates on July 30-31, at which investors expect the Fed to keep the rates unchanged, while looking for any signal of a cut coming later in the year.

Dollar eases
The dollar eased slightly on Mon-

day as investors gauged the implications of US President Joe Biden's decision to end his re-election campaign. The US currency slipped 0.03% to 157.435 yen, while the euro gained 0.07 per cent to \$1.0891 and sterling added 0.08 per cent to \$1.2921, Reuters reported. The Australian dollar sagged



COOL DOWN THIS SUMMER

AT THE FAMILY RESORT: AL WAHA, SHANGRI-LA MUSCAT



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's scorching summer afternoons find their perfect antidote in the refreshing dips and splashes of Al Waha's temperature-controlled pools, located at Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah. As children frolic and parents unwind, this dedicated family resort offers an idyllic staycation experience in Oman.

A family-friendly oasis
Shangri-La Al Waha, meaning 'oasis,' is the largest of the three resorts within the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah complex. Alongside its sister resorts – the water-view marvel Shangri-La Al Bandar and the romantic Shangri-La Al Husn – Al Waha stands out with its family-centric amenities and welcoming atmosphere. Nestled in Barr Al Jissah bay, it features a pristine beach, crystal-clear waters, and dramatic mountain scenery, all of which make it a ha-

ven for families seeking a retreat.

Amenities galore
The resort goes above and beyond to cater to families, offering a plethora of amenities such as the Kids Club, lazy river, dedicated kid's pool, secluded spa, and the splash pad. Guests can enjoy numerous pools or a long stretch of beach, providing the perfect escape for local residents during the summer.

Al Waha's 262 rooms, designed in traditional Dhofari architectural style, offer sparkling sea or lush garden views from private balconies or furnished patios. These rooms create an oasis-like ambiance with their swimming pools and palm-dotted gardens.

A blend of tradition & luxury
Situated at the foot of a dramatic mountain range on Muscat's coastline, Al Waha's traditional Arabic architecture complements its luxurious offerings. Adults can indulge in the spa, while children

Along the pristine coast of Muscat, Shangri-La Al Waha emerges as the ultimate family-friendly oasis within the luxurious Shangri-La Al Barr Jissah complex. This dedicated family resort offers a plethora of amenities, from temperature-controlled pools and a splash pad to a kids' club and diverse dining options. The hotel promises an unforgettable staycation experience for families seeking both relaxation and adventure in Oman this summer.



engage in supervised activities at the Cool Zone kids' club. The resort also features a separate children's pool, a lazy river, and an aquatic play area.

The contemporary rooms and suites, decorated in neutral tones, create a light and airy feel. Each room comes equipped with modern amenities, including flat-screen TVs, minibars, coffee and tea making facilities, and spacious bathrooms with separate baths and shower cubicles.

Families might consider upgrading to a Family Room, which includes two interconnecting bedrooms and amenities designed for younger guests, such as a PlayStation.

Kids are pampered with amenities in their room, from cookie-making set, plush turtle toys and free ice cream and popsicles throughout the day to cool down.

Activities for all age groups
Al Waha offers an extensive

choice of activities, both on land and in the water. Guests can spend hours playing beach volleyball and tennis, or have fun in the Splash-pad water play area, which offers over 20 different water activities in a fully shaded setting. The lazy river allows for a leisurely float between Al Waha and Al Bandar, while the nearby Dive Centre also offers scuba diving, diving for all age groups and windsurfing.

The Cool Zone kids' club offers a range of supervised activities for children, featuring an air-conditioned indoor area and an outdoor play area with an Omani dhow. In addition to the main swimming pools, there is a toddlers' pool with a rubber-cushioned floor and a separate pool for older children in the shape of a mushroom.

Teen-friendly
For teenage guests, the Surf Cafe provides a healthy fast-food menu, with billiards, and other social games.



Adults seeking relaxation can enjoy sunloungers along the beach or around the two main swimming pools, work out at the on-site gym, or join an indoor class at the fitness studio. Chi, The Spa, offers a hydro pool, steam room, ice fountain, tundra and tropical showers, and a Turkish bath, along with a menu of soothing treatments, including massages, facials, body scrubs, body wraps, and traditional Hammam experiences.

Culinary delights
Dining at Al Waha is a journey of diverse culinary experiences. Start at Samba, the dynamic buffet restaurant serving international cuisine with flavors from Asia, Latin America, and the Mediterranean. For light bites and refreshments, the Surf Cafe offers healthy snacks and salads, while Al Waha Lobby Lounge provides panoramic views and a selection of coffees, teas, cocktails, and light snacks. The Assira

pool bar serves light and healthy snacks alongside ice-cold beverages. Alongside the dining options, guests can grab from mid-day pizza cooked live around the pool area – a pure bliss for guests who just want to chill by the pool.

Guests can also enjoy contemporary Italian cuisine at Capri Court, located within 2 mins walk from Al Waha or adults can head to Sultanah for a fine dining Mediterranean cuisine.

Staycation beckons
Shangri-La Al Waha in Muscat is more than just a resort; it is a sanctuary for families seeking a blend of luxury, comfort, and adventure. With its extensive amenities, breathtaking views, and diverse dining options, it promises an unforgettable staycation experience in Oman.

The stay currently is at OMR 60 net per couple with 2 kids below six years of age, inclusive of breakfast.

SPORTS

OMAN AT 2024 GAMES

Shooter Al Khatri aims for a good show on Olympic debut in Paris

MUSCAT: Oman's shooter Said Al Khatri is set to make his debut at the 33rd Summer Olympic Games in Paris 2024 with high hopes for a decent performance.

Al Khatri, who arrived in Châteauroux, France, on Sunday, is participating in a warm-up camp in preparation for the men's trap event. Determined to leave a mark on his first Olympic appearance, Al Khatri is focused on achieving high scores and excelling in his participation.

Competing against several world-ranked shooters, he aims to gain valuable technical experience and essential skills to perform at the highest level.

The preliminary qualifications for the men's trap event are scheduled for July 29 and 30 at the Châteauroux Shooting Centre. Shooters will be divided



into groups, with the top-ranked participants advancing to the final rounds to compete for medals.

Under the guidance of Italian coach Luca Marini, who recently joined the national team's coaching staff, Al Khatri is honing his skills.

Marini is renowned for his expertise, having coached numer-

ous top teams and shooters. This is the first Olympics where shooters can train at the Châteauroux Shooting Centre more than ten days before the competition starts.

Located 200km south of Paris, the centre is the largest of its kind in Europe, providing Al Khatri with a prime opportunity to train



in top-notch facilities and acclimatise to the Olympic atmosphere while also getting accustomed to his rifle and other factors.

Al Khatri's participation in the Paris Olympics follows his successful fulfillment of all requirements and points needed to obtain the Olympic invitation card.

The positive relations of the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) with the Olympic Solidarity Committee and international sports federations also played a role.

A prominent shooter on the national team, Al Khatri has achieved significant accomplishments and titles in his career. He won first

place in the Kuwait Amir's Open Shooting Championship last year and was ranked among the top eight shooters in Asia, advancing to the Asian finals and securing seventh place in the 2023 Asian Cup held alongside the open championship in Kuwait.

Elsewhere, Ali Salim Al Busafi, Oman's Chef de Mission, arrived late on Monday to ensure all preparations and arrangements are in place for the arrival of national team representatives in the coming days.

Al Busafi will attend the first meeting of Chefs de Mission at the Olympic Village on Tuesday. The meeting will cover various topics, including accommodation arrangements for Oman's delegation members and requirements for the official Olympic opening ceremony on Friday.

Schauffele holds off Rose to triumph at the Open

The American claimed his second major title in three months and became the first player to win The Open and US PGA Championship in the same year since Rory McIlroy in 2014

TROON: Xander Schauffele held off the challenge of Justin Rose to win the 152nd Open Championship at the end of a captivating week at Royal Troon on Sunday.

It is a second major title in three months for 30-year-old Schauffele, who becomes the first player to win The Open and US PGA Championship in the same year since Rory McIlroy in 2014.

The American hit a stunning bogey-free six-under 65 to finish on nine under, two clear of his playing partner Rose, who shot a



67 in a fascinating duel in breezy conditions. "Hearing your name called with Open champion after it is something I've dreamed of for a very long time," said the Champion Golfer of the Year.

For Rose, whose sole major remains his 2013 US Open tri-

umph, it has been the closest he has come to lifting the Claret Jug, 26 years after he finished joint fourth as a 17-year-old to win the Silver Medal as low amateur. "The dream's been alive all week and I did an awesome job," the 43-year-old, who came through a qualifying



event in Somerset, told *BBC Sport*.

"This will be a tough one but a great one. I played in some of the hardest weather all week. I played some of the best golf but it didn't quite add up to the trophy."

Three birdies in his opening seven holes had put Rose briefly in

the lead on six under, but Schauffele surged three clear of his fellow Olympic gold medallist with an electrifying run of five birdies in nine holes from the sixth.

He took just 31 shots to complete the back nine, which has been routinely referred to this week as the

hardest in championship golf.

Overnight leader Billy Horschel, who faded after a fast start, birdied the final three holes to join Rose in joint second. Victory for Schauffele caps a remarkable season in the majors, recording top-10 finishes in all four, with two wins.

And his win here means all four men's majors have been won by American players for the first time since 1982, with Scottie Scheffler claiming his second Masters in April, and Bryson DeChambeau the US Open in June.

"I thought [winning the US PGA Championship] would help me and it actually did," said Schauffele.

"I had this sense of calm, a calm I didn't have when I played earlier at the PGA.

"For some reason, I was calm and collected. I was telling my caddie Austin that I felt pretty calm coming down the stretch and he said he was about to puke on the 18th tee!

"I just told myself to just hit it down there and keep moving along."

It means England's hopes of a first winner of The Open extend to a 33rd year, with Sir Nick Faldo's triumph at Muirfield in 1992 still the last.

Scotland's Calum Scott scooped the Silver Medal as low amateur. His closing 76 won him that title on eight over par. - Agencies

SLOVENIA RIDER

Pogacar seals third Tour de France title

NICE: Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar sealed a sensational Tour de France-Giro d'Italia double by winning the stage 21 time trial into Nice on Sunday.

The UAE Team Emirates rider finished the Tour with a sixth stage victory and became the first man to win cycling's two biggest races in the same year since Italian Marco Pantani in 1998.

The Tour's finale was held outside of Paris for the first time since 1903 as the French capital prepares to host the Olympics.

Wearing the yellow jersey Slovenia's Pogacar, 25, finished the stage 63 seconds clear of second-placed Jonas Vingegaard.

The win secured his third Tour de France title, extending his lead over nearest rival and two-time winner Vingegaard, of Visma-Lease a Bike, to six minutes and 17 seconds. "I cannot describe how happy I am," said Pogacar.

"After two hard years in the Tour de France, this year everything went to perfection."

Tour debutant Remco Evenepoel, riding for Soudal-Quick-Step, finished third on the stage and completed the general classification podium, nine minutes and 18 seconds behind Pogacar.

The 2024 edition will also be remembered for Mark Cavendish's record 35th stage victory in Saint Vulbas in the opening week.

After completing the final stage, the legendary British sprinter said this year's Tour is likely to have been his last race.

As well as two Grand Tours Pogacar has also won the Classics Liege-Bastogne-Liege and



Strade Bianche this season

Pogacar dominated this year's Tour de France - becoming the first rider to win six stages in a single edition since Cavendish in 2009. He also spent 19 days in the yellow jersey, holding it exclusively from stage four.

This year's Tour was arguably won on stage 15 where, already ahead by almost two minutes, Pogacar stormed to victory on a gruelling climb up to Plateau de Beille to extend his lead over Vingegaard by another 69 seconds.

Four days later he had overall victory wrapped up, ascending to this year's Vuelta a Espana, Isola 2000 where he put a further one minute and 42 seconds into his nearest rivals.

The Slovenian looked a level above Vingegaard, who he fin-

ished second behind at the last two editions, with the Dane still recovering from a broken collarbone and ribs suffered in April.

Pogacar's Tour de France dominance matches his performance at this year's Giro d'Italia, where he blew away the competition to win by nine minutes and 56 seconds. "Already it would have been an incredible year, but to win the Tour de France is another level," added Pogacar. "To win both together is another level above that level."

In July Pogacar said he was "99% sure" he would not compete at this year's Vuelta a Espana, where he could become the first ever rider to win all three Grand Tours in the same calendar year.

He will represent Slovenia at the men's road race at the Olym-

pics in Paris on 3 August.

By finishing safely in Nice, sprinter Biniam Girmay made history - becoming the first black African winner of the Tour de France points classification.

He had a sensational race. On day three he became the first Eritrean to win a stage at the Tour, and he went on to record two more victories - on stage eight and stage 12.

The green jersey winner, 24, was one of only six black African riders in the top-level WorldTour peloton of 534 in 2023, the year he made his Tour de France debut.

The King of the Mountains classification was won by Richard Carapaz while Belgian Evenepoel, 24, claimed the white jersey as the best rider in the general classification under the age of 25. - Agencies

FORMULA ONE

I didn't give up the win: Norris

HUNGARORING: Lando Norris agonised over whether to hand victory in the Hungarian Grand Prix back to team-mate Oscar Piastri but said it was the "fair" and "honest" thing to do.

The Briton spent 20 laps debating the move with his team, as the drivers raced to McLaren's first one-two for nearly three years, but said that he was "always quite confident" he was going to do it. "I didn't deserve to win the race," Norris said. "Simple as that. The fact I was in that position was incorrect.

"If Oscar's led the whole race, it's not fair, and I don't think that's how it should work, that he should just let me pass for me to win because I'm fighting for a championship. I didn't give up the race win. I lost it off the line."

Both drivers admitted after the race that McLaren had made their lives harder than would be ideal.

Norris was ahead of Piastri - for whom this was a maiden win - only because the team had chosen to make the Briton's second and final pit stop early to protect against Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes, who had recently made his own and fitted fresh tyres. McLaren were cautious in the timing - excessively so, some said - because Norris still had five seconds to play with.

But team principal Andrea Stella said he preferred to reduce the impact of a potential delay at a pit stop and handle the situation within the team than risk losing track position.



The decision to pit Norris first from just over a second behind inevitably - because of the extra pace provided by fresh tyres - put Norris ahead of Piastri when the Australian made his own final stop a couple of laps later. And the situation did indeed appear to take some handling.

Time and again, Norris' engineer Will Joseph went on the radio to urge the Briton to follow instructions; time and again Norris pushed back, or sometimes did not respond at all.

At one point, Joseph had to say: "Radio check" to ensure Norris was getting the messages. "Loud and clear," came the reply.

Why did he not reassure the team, Norris was asked.

"I don't need to," he said. "I know what I'm going to do and not going to do. Of course I'm going to question and challenge it. And that's what I did." - Agencies

Own new stylish and fuel efficient Toyota Yaris with exciting benefits

Toyota Yaris delivers a dynamic driving experience with its four-cylinder engine that is equipped with 16-valve DOCH and dual VVT-I

MUSCAT: The Toyota Yaris is a pragmatic yet stylish fuel efficient automobile. Crafted for creating pleasurable city-life experiences, the sedan offers spacious interiors and advanced safety features. Beat the heat this summer and invest into the remarkably efficient sedan with Toyota's Summer Delight offer. New Toyota Yaris owners can experience huge savings and achieve peace of mind with free service upgrades up to 3 years/30000 KMS or 10 years/100,000km (whichever comes first). Double up on savings with 1-year free insurance or a cash gift in lieu ranging from RO 125 to RO 450 and 3-month EMI holiday opportunity, exclusively brought to you by Toyota Oman. Moreover, relish the summer fun by getting a chance to enter the



Grand Raffle draw and win an all-paid Turkiye holiday for a family of four or an 10 iPhone 15 Pro Max. Grab the limited-time opportunity before the campaign ends on August 1, 2024. Toyota Yaris delivers a dynamic driving experience with its four-cylinder engine that is equipped with 16-valve DOCH and dual VVT-I. The vehicle is available

with a 1.5-liter capacity engine that delivers smooth acceleration and a quick response, producing 105 horsepower and 138 Nm of torque with fuel consumption of 20.5 km/l. This is paired with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT), which simulates a seven-speed sequential shift transmission to deliver powerful, smooth acceleration from start-off and

at low speeds, and quiet, efficient transmission at higher speeds with excellent fuel efficiency and optimal performance output. Experience the luxe spacious cabin that is designed to provide greater comfort and convenience for both the driver and passengers. A 7-inch Thin Film Transistor (TFT) multi-information display and digital LED speedometer with

customization options. Load your belongings in the back with the spacious 475-litre capacity for everyone. The vehicle is utilitarian and exhibits simplicity, yet maintains its class. It features an 8-inch multimedia screen with Apple CarPlay® & Android Auto together with a USB port on the head unit and two ports at the rear console that en-

able passengers to connect external media devices. Additional features include a four or six-speaker sound system and an automatic air conditioning system with two rear vents for extra passenger comfort. Meanwhile, parents benefit from the added peace of mind provided by Toyota's ISOFIX safety system, which attaches baby seats securely using specially designed tethers. The all-new Yaris maintains Toyota's sterling safety standards. Its safety system is complemented by Toyota Safety Sense, an advanced safety technology package that includes a Pre-Collision System (PCS), Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), Lane Departure Prevention (LDP), as well as a new Front Departure Alert (FDA) feature that gives drivers a visual and audible warning when a stationary vehicle in front begins to move forward. In addition, the vehicle comes with a comprehensive array of safety features to protect its driver and occupants. These include SRS airbags, with options available based on the grade for either two or six airbags (including front airbags for the driver passenger, side airbags for the front seats, and side-curtain airbags for the front and rear seats), Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Brake Assist (BA), Electric Parking Brake (EPB) with Brake hold function, Traction Control (TRC), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC) and many others.

INCREDIBLE FEAT

530,000km and thriving: The unbelievable journey of Geely Emgrand X7 Sport trendy SUV

MUSCAT: Geely, the renowned automotive brand and Towell Auto Centre (TAC), the exclusive distributor of Geely vehicles in Oman, celebrates a monumental achievement with one of our amazing customers in Oman. Muhamed Muhsin, the proud owner of a Geely Emgrand X7 Sport Trendy SUV has just crossed a mind-blowing milestone for a whopping 530,000 kilometres. That's right, you read that correctly, half a million kilometres on a Geely! That's an incredible feat achieved by our happy Geely customer here in Oman. Muhsin purchased his SUV in November 2017, because of its testament to reliability and performance built. He added that he has been cruising across Oman's diverse landscapes for over six years now, and his Geely is still going strong. He even shared his experiences and feedback with the Geely team, reflecting on the vehicle's remarkable features and the outstanding support he received. To gain further insight into what makes Geely the perfect travel companion for him, let's hear from Muhsin himself.

Superior features at unbeatable prices Muhsin wasn't just looking for a car, he was looking for a partner for the road. Geely impressed him with the perfect blend of modern features, competitive pricing, and sleek design. Boasting modern features like a user-friendly touchscreen infotainment system keeps him well connected and entertained on the roads. The competitive price tag made it a smart choice, making it a fantastic value-for-money SUV. But what truly sealed the deal was the sleek design. The Emgrand X7 Sport turned heads wherever he travelled, making every journey a stylish adventure. It's a winning combination for Moshin proving one doesn't have to break the bank to experience a feature-rich and head-turning driving experience. His X7 offered him a blend of practicality, affordability, and undeniable flair all-at-once.

Outstanding service and support This incredible feat wasn't just about the car, but also the dedicated service. Owning a car is a journey, and just like any good road trip, reliable support by your side makes all the difference. That's what Muhsin experienced with Towell Auto Centre and Geely's



innovative after-sales program, forever IP (Infinite Possibilities). "The service has been fantastic, which is why my car has successfully covered so many kilometres. I am extremely happy with the service," Muhsin shared. "Forever IP goes beyond basic maintenance. They offer transparent pricing and explain everything clearly. Plus, their 24x7 roadside assistance provides peace of mind on long journeys." This commitment to exceptional service, coupled with genuine parts guaranteed by Forever IP, is a key reason why Muhsin's Geely Emgrand X7 Sport is still cruising strong after half a million kilometres. What amazes Muhsin is the vehicle's remarkable durability. He emphasizes the car is cost-effective, stating, "I drive long distances for business, and the maintenance costs are quite reasonable." Adding to the praise, he states, "The ve-

hicle's performance has been very well, and I find it highly durable." **Exceptional interior and comfort** Those long journeys were a breeze for the whole family says, Moshin. The comfy interior with its awesome centre console and display screen kept everyone entertained, making every mile a joyride. "While driving long distances, my family feels extremely comfortable. The seating capacity is excellent, and my son can play and sleep inside the car without any issues," he stated while speaking about his experience. **Adaptable to Oman's roads** Muhsin also commended the vehicle's adaptability to Oman's diverse terrains. He went ahead and highlighted that "The suspension components remain in excellent condition, requiring no replacements despite the high kilometres

clocked". This adaptability has ensured smooth and uninterrupted journeys across the country for him. **Memorable journeys and enduring durability** Memories made, miles conquered. Muhsin is used to putting his Geely through its paces, conquering Oman's diverse landscapes. He has embarked on numerous memorable journeys during his ownership, routinely travelling to destinations like Dubai and Salalah. Additionally, his weekly business trips to Sur demonstrate the vehicle's exceptional durability and resilience. These extensive journeys consistently provided comfort and safety for his family. **A heartfelt recommendation** Muhamed Muhsin's extensive experience with his Geely Emgrand X7 Sport Trendy SUV has solidified his confidence in the brand.

He wholeheartedly recommends Geely to potential buyers, citing its exceptional value proposition. "The combination of competitive pricing, strong performance, and low maintenance costs makes this car a truly compelling choice," Muhsin enthusiastically shared. **Celebrating a personal milestone** Surpassing the impressive 500,000-kilometer mark signifies more than just a numerical achievement for Muhamed Muhsin. It represents a personal accomplishment and a testament to the enduring partnership he has forged with his Geely vehicle. Reflecting on his experience, Muhsin enthusiastically stated, "I feel wonderful driving 530,000 kilometres in just six years!", reflecting on his journey. Geely extends its sincere congratulations to Muhsin on reach-

ing this significant milestone. His experience on the Emgrand X7 Sport validates Geely's commitment to reliable, feature-rich vehicles and we are proud to have been a part of his journey until now and ahead. As we celebrate, we are excited to unveil Geely's future to our valued customers, our 2025 Geely lineup with innovative features and futuristic technology. This exciting range showcases a variety of models, including the popular Emgrand sedans, the sporty Coolray SUVs, the luxurious Preface sedans, and the powerful Tugella SUVs. Every model boasts of innovative features and futuristic technology, promising an exceptional driving experience for all. Making Geely ownership even more rewarding, a sizzling summer promotion awaits! Enjoy deals on select models with offers, financing options and complimentary service packages.

ROUND-UP

Stay connected and manage your finances with BankDhofar mobile banking this travel season

Whether travelling abroad, working at a summer internship, or enjoying the picturesque Salalah or Jabal Al Akhdhar, BankDhofar’s Mobile Banking app ensures that your financial needs are always within reach

MUSCAT: BankDhofar highlighted the convenience and accessibility of its Mobile Banking services. Designed to help customers stay connected to their finances anytime, anywhere, BankDhofar’s mobile banking is the perfect companion during the travel season. BankDhofar’s Mobile Banking app offers a wide range of features that allow customers to manage their accounts, make payments, and stay updated on their financial activities with ease. Whether trav-

elling abroad, working at a summer internship, or enjoying the picturesque Salalah or Jabal Al Akhdhar, BankDhofar’s Mobile Banking app ensures that your financial needs are always within reach.

Key features:
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auto pay for bills that come due on a regular schedule in predictable amounts, so customers wouldn’t have to worry about them.

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Instant transfer: Customers can make international payments easily and instantly. There are a wide range of options including international remittances, Western Union, SWIFT, and Quick Remittance to India. There is no exchange mark ups.

Secure transactions: State-of-the-art security features ensure that your financial information is protected at all times.

Real-time notifications: Receive instant alerts and updates on account activity, keeping you informed and in control.

Contactless payments: With

Dhofar-Pay and Samsung pay, customers can effortlessly tap and transact using their NFC-enabled Android phones, without the need to carry physical cards, providing convenience and security with seamless payment experience for customers.

BankDhofar’s mobile banking app offers a wide range of exclusive services which are available only through the app. The services include; instant transfer to any bank in the Sultanate of Oman, a mobile top-up for telecom providers in the Sultanate, as well as Debit & Credit Card controls and management, BankDhofar customers can access the financial services through a wide network of branches, ATMs and CDMs around the Sultanate.

The network includes 124 branches, 360 ATMs, CDMs, FFMs and MFks that work round-the-clock with highest ATM uptime in the Sultanate. The Bank launched Cardless ATM Banking Services using mobile, which enables customers to conduct ATM transactions easily only by using their mobile numbers.



EXPLORING RICH THAI CULTURE

Thai Week to begin at MGM on July 24

MUSCAT: The Thai Week activities will begin this Wednesday evening, July 24, at Muscat Grand Mall (MGM), in cooperation with the Royal Thai Embassy in Muscat, and will continue until July 27. Reem Abdel Moneim, Marketing Director at Tilal Development Company, stated that the events will start at 5 pm and continue until 10 pm daily. Reem added: “We at Muscat Grand Mall are very pleased to host this unique cultural event for the second consecutive season, which is very popular. Thai Week will include a variety of cultural and artistic activities, including Thai cultural performances, folk dances, artistic paintings, in addition to authentic and delicious Thai street food, drinks and fruits. There will also be an opportunity to learn about Thai culture, heritage and products. This event is a great opportunity for the public to explore the rich Thai culture and enjoy the unique experiences it has to of-



Thai Week will include a variety of cultural and artistic activities, including Thai cultural performances, folk dances, artistic paintings

fer. Do not miss the opportunity to attend and participate in this distinguished cultural festival in Muscat Grand Mall.

NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN

Muzn Islamic unveils innovative Sharia-compliant alternative to bill discounting

MUSCAT: Demonstrating its commitment to innovation, National Bank of Oman Muzn Islamic Banking has announced the launch of its ground-breaking product, Term Wakala Finance an alternative for bill discounting. This Sharia-compliant financial solution offers customers a hassle-free way to settle their financial obligations across various sectors. This pioneering product marks a significant advancement in Islamic banking, highlighting Muzn’s dedication to providing innovative financial solutions. Salima Al Marzooqi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Muzn, said: “The Term Wakala Finance an alternative for bill discounting offers our customers a unique combination of convenience and compliance with Sharia principles. By choosing this product, customers can efficiently manage their financial obligations across various sectors, ensuring smooth transactions with both local and international merchants. This solution, which is available to all Muzn customers now, not only



simplifies bill settlement processes but also aligns with our commitment to ethical and transparent banking practices. “With this launch, Muzn continues to lead the way in Islamic banking innovation, providing tools that enable our clients to

“

By choosing this product, customers can efficiently manage their financial obligations across various sectors, ensuring smooth transactions with both local and international merchants

Salima Al Marzooqi
Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Muzn

manage their financial responsibilities with ease and confidence.” Muzn’s Term Wakala Finance an alternative for bill discounting, which is based on the concept of WakalabilIstithmar, offers customers an efficient bill discounting module, allowing them to ef-

fortlessly settle their dues across a variety of sectors. Whether dealing with local and international merchants, managing export bills, or handling contractor payments, this new product ensures that customers can efficiently manage their financial commitments.

STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Al Sharqiyah University receives students from Arab universities

MUSCAT: Within the framework of strengthening international cooperation in the student exchange field between the Omani and Arab universities, Al Sharqiyah University received 27 female students from Misr University for Science & Technology, Tanta University, Obour Institutes, Modern Academy for Science and Engineering/Modern Academy for Engineering and Technology in the Arab Republic of Egypt, Al-Quds University, Al-Quds Open University, Palestine Ahliya University, and Modern University Collage from the State of Palestine. The aim of the exchange is for training at the university during the period from July 14 to Au-

gust 10. For its part, the university sent 21 of its students to the Arab Republic of Egypt to Tanta University, the Modern Academy for Engineering and Technology, and Al-Obour Institutes, as part of the student training exchange program supervised by the Arab Council for Training and Student Creativity. **Easy accessibility** It is worth noting that has organised an integrated program to ensure easy accessibility and accommodation for female students and to provide them with all the necessary needs during the training program period to ensure maximum benefit from this



program. The university also organized an introductory program for Egyptian and Palestinian stu-

dents that included a simplified introduction to the university and an introductory tour of cam-

pus, colleges, and some university facilities, such as the Student Services Center, the Learning Resources Center, and other facilities. A schedule has also been set to supervise the program’s progress through several meetings in which the relevant university units meet to provide all means necessary to support the success of the program. Hamid Al Wahaibi, Director of the Planning and Development Department at AlSharqiyah University, the program supervisor, said: This training program contributes to developing the students’ abilities, refining their personalities, activating their youth creativity,

developing their skills in various fields, providing scientific training in their specializations, and getting to know different work environments. Al Wahaibi noted that the program will include recreational trips to a number of governorates and willayets, including Muscat Governorate, Wilayat of Sur, and Nizwa to learn about the most important historical and cultural monuments and the culture and history of the Sultanate of Oman. Al Wahaibi hopes to achieve the university’s desired goals from this program, which will contribute directly to the formation of international academic and research relations.



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